



St. Louis Audubon Society



Tale Feathers

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Jim Rathert to Discuss Nature Photography at February Meeting

by Jim Holsen

Jim Rathert, the well-known photographer for the *Missouri Conservationist*, will present an illustrated lecture on "Nature Photography and the Natural Realm" when he addresses the joint meeting of St. Louis Audubon and the Webster Groves Nature Study Society at 8 pm on Friday, February 12.

Jim's photographs appear frequently in publications of the Missouri Department of Conservation. This meeting will provide a forum for discussing the pleasures and problems of photographing Missouri's wildlife and exceptional scenery.

The meeting will be held in the large auditorium of the headquarters building of the St. Louis County Library on Lindbergh Boulevard, just south of the Clayton Road intersection in Frontenac, opposite Frontenac Plaza. Highway 40/I-64 crosses Lindbergh Boulevard a short distance north of the Clayton Road intersection.

Meeting rooms are along the northern side of the library, so visitors are advised to park in the spaces to the north of the building.

Sign Up Now for Early Spring Birding Trip to See Missouri Prairie Chickens

by Jim Malone

In the last couple of years, we have taken weekend trips to southern Missouri, central Illinois, and east central Missouri during spring and fall migrations to visit other birding sites in the region. This year we have scheduled an outing to a special, early spring location to look at some increasingly rare birds. On the weekend of April 9-11, Bill Rowe will be leading us to central Missouri to experience the "booming" of Missouri's Greater Prairie Chickens!

Each spring, male Prairie Chickens perform elaborate courtship calls and dances (in special areas called leks) to attract the attention of potential mates. At one time, the prairies of the Midwest were filled with these birds, but as man's agricultural needs expanded and the prairies disappeared, so have the Prairie Chickens. Now, these stout ground dwellers are restricted to a few pockets throughout the state. Although the numbers have dropped, the pageantry of the mating rituals remains unchanged. Since the birds return to the same leks year after year, they are easy to relocate in areas where lek sites have been identified.

Bill Rowe is known to many St. Louis birders for the informative birdwatching classes he offers each spring and fall and for the wonderful trips he leads to top birding locations in the United States. Just talk to anyone who has been involved in either of these activities, and you always get enthusiastic references to the quality, skill, and fun Bill imparts to each of these ventures.

This spring, Bill will be taking us to an area near Versailles, Missouri, where there is an active Prairie Chicken lek. In order to be at the lek at

sunrise (when the show begins), we will need to stay in Versailles overnight on Friday, April 9. We will bird all day on Saturday, looking for birds of the season, and then either return to St. Louis that evening or come back early on Sunday.

If this trip sounds like something you would be interested in, please send your name and address and a \$5 per person deposit (to cover copying and handling costs) to:

Jim Malone
15424 Elk Ridge Lane
Chesterfield, MO 63017

I will supply a detailed itinerary for the trip, birds we can expect to see, and lodging arrangements. If you have any other questions about this trip, call Jim Malone at 536-1119. This will be a great trip; hope to see you there!



Gull and Waterfowl Bird Outings this Fall and Winter

by Jim Malone

In December, we had a great birding trip to Horseshoe Lake. Although the day started out overcast and heavily fogged in, a group of nearly 30 participants was not about to be put off by the weather!

We started out near the Horseshoe Lake State Park office, checking the tree line for woodpeckers and passerines. Our efforts were rewarded with sightings of American Goldfinches, St. Louis' special Eurasian Tree Sparrow, White-throated Sparrows, Song Sparrows, a Golden-crowned Kinglet, and a very friendly Carolina Wren. As we moved around the north side of the lake, we found several gulls floating out in the lake including Bonaparte's Gulls and a pair of Franklin's Gulls.

Farther down at the boat launching ramps, we were able to see Common Loons and a variety of waterfowl across the lake near the end of Lawton

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From Your President

by Jim Holsen

Pedro's Planet Makes Year-End Gift to Audubon and Other Groups

The Missouri Environmental Fund has announced that Pedro's Planet, a business supply firm located in Hanley Industrial Court, made a year-end gift of \$3,000 to the Fund.

The donor stipulated that \$300 be designated to each of 5 environmental groups, including St. Louis Audubon. The remaining \$1,500 will be split evenly among all 26 member organizations of the Fund. Other organizations receiving \$300 gifts are the Missouri Coalition for the Environment, Trailnet, the Sierra Club Foundation, and the World Bird Sanctuary.

Cap Left at October Picnic

A lady's cap with a bicolor visor and a Liz Claiborne label was left behind by someone at the Audubon picnic on October 18. The owner should call Jim Holsen at 822-0410.

Speaker Set for Audubon Annual Dinner

by Mary Dueren

Make a note on your calendars for St. Louis Audubon's annual dinner to be held on April 22. The location will be announced in the next *Tale Feathers* issue.

The featured speaker will be Paul Tebbel, manager of the Lillian Rowe Audubon Sanctuary in Kearney, Nebraska. Over the last 5 or 6 years, St. Louis Audubon has sent board members to attend National Audubon Society's Annual Rivers and Wildlife Conference in Kearney. This year, Paul has kindly agreed to speak at our dinner. His presentation will discuss life at a sanctuary. Look for more details in the next newsletter.

Announcement for Director Audubon Missouri Office National Audubon Society

The National Audubon Society, one of the nation's leading conservation organizations, is seeking a director for Audubon Missouri, a new state office. The director will be the chief executive officer for Audubon within Missouri and responsible for the organization's overall performance in the state. The director will be an employee of the National Audubon Society, will be accountable to the membership in the state of Missouri, and coordinate with the board of directors of Audubon Missouri on policy and program implementation issues.

The director will be responsible for the growth and development, management, and integration of all Audubon programs within Missouri including wildlife policy, habitat management and restoration, water quality issues, management of National Audubon sanctuaries and centers, environmental education, private landowner outreach, government affairs, implementation of the Important Bird Areas program, Audubon Campaigns, science, communication, media relations, and fund raising.

This position requires a proven commitment to conservation, a high level of professional experience in wildlife conservation, public lands management, private landowner outreach, and solid fund-raising experience. Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, computer literacy, and experience working with volunteers of a non-profit organization are essential.

We offer a competitive salary and benefits package. For a detailed job description, contact Glenn Olson at 916/481-5332. For confidential consideration, send a resume indicating salary requirements to:

Glenn Olson, Field Director
National Audubon Society
555 Audubon Place
Sacramento, CA 95825
 (Equal Opportunity Employer)



Get to Know . . . Missy Stern

(This is the twenty-seventh in a series of articles written about and by St. Louis Audubon board members themselves so that all our membership can be better acquainted with our decision makers on the board.)

I am currently working for the Missouri Department of Conservation as an urban wildlife biologist for the St. Louis region. My office is located at the Powder Valley Nature Center in Kirkwood, and I would encourage all to stop by for a visit.

My work is quite varied, ranging from green space preservation and land use planning to deer management. Working as a wildlife biologist in an urban region presents many interesting challenges given the rapid development and habitat loss taking place all around the metro region. Most recently, I have been working with Town and Country on the deer relocation project.

I am a passionate outdoors person and enjoy just about anything taking place outside. I try to spend as much time as possible hiking, climbing, and biking. I usually throw a field guide in my pack and enjoy trying to identify the flora and fauna I see in my travels. I have gone on backpacking trips all over, ranging from Alaska to South America.

I grew up in St. Louis and returned to the area a year and a half ago from the West Coast. I have a B.A. from Brown University and a Master's in Ecology from Duke University. I have been working in the environmental field for 6 years in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. I have had the opportunity to work for 2 branches of the Smithsonian Institution, including the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center with a focus on tropical forest fragments. It has been very interesting to work in these diverse sectors and gain the perspectives of industry, government, and non-profits on environmental conservation.

I am a relative newcomer to Audubon's board, having joined less than a year ago. I have greatly enjoyed being part of the board and participating in the many projects St. Louis Audubon undertakes. I am a novice birder, and being involved in Audubon activities has shown me just how far my birding skills have to go!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Audubon Birding Trips

Bring binoculars, bird field guide, & dress for field conditions & weather. Coaching & instruction for all levels. For confirmation & more information, call trip leaders Paul Bauer (H# 921-3972) or Jim Malone (H# 536-1119).

Horseshoe Lake — *Saturday, February 20*, at 9 am. Group should see winter gulls if weather is cold & wintering Horned or Eared Grebes if water is open, along with good mix of ducks. Take I-55/70 east of St. Louis to north on Hwy 111. Go through park entrance to HQ building. See related article on page 1.

Busch Conservation Area — *Saturday, March 6*, at 8 am. In St. Charles County. Take Hwy 94 south of US 40, 1 mile to right on Hwy D. Go 1.5 miles to entrance on right. Pass through gate to Hampton Lake parking lot on left.

Horseshoe Lake — *Sunday, March 21*, at 8 am. First annual sparrow roundup. See directions in earlier entry.

Prairie Chicken Lek in Central Missouri — *Friday through Sunday, April 9-11*. Bill Rowe will lead group to experience "booming" of Missouri's Greater Prairie Chickens. In order to be at lek at sunrise, group will stay Friday night in Versailles. See related article on page 1.

Audubon-Related Activities

Joint Membership Meeting with WGNSS — *Friday, February 12*, at 8 pm. Jim Rathert, *Missouri Conservationist* photographer, will discuss photography from a naturalist's point of view. Held at St. Louis County Library Headquarters building. See related article on page 1.

National Audubon's Annual Rivers and Wildlife Conference — *Saturday through Monday, March 13-15*, in Kearney, Nebraska. Conference comes at height of Sandhill Crane spring migration in Platte River area. For more info. & phone numbers, see related article on this page.

Special Events

Masters of the Sky — *Saturday & Sunday, February 6-7*, at Alton. Program highlighting American Bald Eagle sponsored by Corps of Engineers. For more info., call Riverlands office & ask for Julie Ziino or Brian Markert, 899-2600.

World Bird Sanctuary Eagle Days — *Saturday, March 6*, at Lone Elk County Park. For more info., call Sanctuary at Lone Elk Park, 225-4390.

The Paddlefish: Biology of a Freshwater Whale — *Wednesday, March 10*, from 7:30 to 9 pm. Talk by Dr. Lon Wilkens, Biology Dept. of University of Missouri-St. Louis. Part of Science Seminar Series cosponsored by St. Louis Zoo & Academy of Science of St. Louis. Held in the Living World—free parking in North Lot of Zoo. No charge—adults, teachers, secondary students, & public invited. For more info., call 768-5466 or 533-8083.

Gull and Waterfowl Bird Outings. . .

from page 1

Road. Later that location provided wonderful close views of the loons, as well as Buffleheads, Common Mergansers, Ruddy Ducks, Lesser Scaup, Pied-billed and Horned Grebes, Belted Kingfisher, and Double-crested Cormorants, to name a few. A quick trip to the Horseshoe Lake borrow pit gave us a chance to study more gulls (mostly Herring and Ring-billed) and a great view of a late Great Egret.

On January 16, our first 1999 trip was a great way to start the year. More than 40 participants braved the cold and ice at Riverlands to share the morning birding with us. A few lucky individuals who arrived early saw a pair of Snow Buntings in a Horned Lark flock at the site office feeders. Later when everyone had a chance to view the feeders, the Buntings were gone, but we did see American Tree Sparrows, Eurasian Tree Sparrows, Song Sparrows, and Red-winged Blackbirds. Across the road from the office, Northern Harriers and Rough-legged Hawks flew low over the grass or perched in the pecan trees waiting for their next meal.

In Ellis Bay, breaks in the ice were filled with Great Blue Herons, a Belted Kingfisher, Common

Annual Rivers and Wildlife Celebration in Kearney, Nebraska, March 13-15

by Jim Holsen

Each March an estimated 500,000 Sandhill Cranes converge on Nebraska's central Platte River, an event that is described as one of the most awe inspiring in the avian world. The National Audubon Society's Annual Rivers and Wildlife Conference, formerly known as the Spring Rivers Conference, will be held at the Ramada Inn in Kearney, Nebraska, on March 13-15.

This conference, held near the Rowe Sanctuary on the Platte River, comes at the height of the spring migration. Speakers will include Kent Clegg, Ultralite pilot and Whooping Crane migration guide; Frank Gill, chief scientist for National Audubon who will speak on the demise of songbirds; Paul Johnsgard, who will speak on hummingbirds, wonders of the bird world; and John Flicker, National Audubon Society president. The conference will include 3 symposia on environmental education, backyard wildlife habitat, and Audubon leadership training.

To receive an information packet or to make reservations, call 402/475-1177. Other useful numbers are the Rowe Sanctuary at 308/468-5282 and the Kearney Visitors Bureau at 800/227-8340.

Goldeneye, Ring-billed Gull, Pied-billed Grebe, Canvasbacks and Mallards. In the Mississippi River down river from the Clark Bridge, there were thousands of gulls and waterfowl. Once again Common Goldeneyes and Canvasbacks dominated the ducks, but there were also Common Mergansers in the group. A first winter Glaucous Gull was swimming around in the midst of the Goldeneyes, and a second one was seen at Lincoln Shields, but no Black-backed Gulls were positively identified in the river. A final trip to the dam allowed some to see an adult Thayer's Gull flying over the churning water, and the grass along the road yielded a Short-eared Owl to yet others.

We will be making another visit to Horseshoe Lake on February 20. This trip could have all of the birds mentioned above and perhaps some interesting winter gulls if the weather is cold. If the water is open, we may see wintering Horned or Eared Grebes, and we are certain to see a good mix of ducks. As always, our birding outings are aimed at participants with all levels of experience. Come out and join us, and learn more about birding in the St. Louis area.

The Conservation Corner

Missouri Audubon Council Has Busy Agenda

by Jim Holsen

The Missouri Audubon Council, which consists of representatives from Missouri's 14 Audubon chapters plus the Audubon Society of Missouri, met in Jefferson City on Saturday, January 17, with a busy agenda. Usually this January meeting is devoted to a discussion of environmental legislation that will be introduced in the spring session of the Missouri General Assembly, but this month decisions about the proposed Audubon State Office, Audubon's Upper Mississippi River Campaign, and high capacity chip mills took up much of the Council's time.

Audubon Missouri — The decision to proceed with the establishment of Audubon Missouri, as the proposed Audubon State Office will be known, has been made by the National Audubon Society, although not quite all of the money necessary for the first year's operational needs has been obtained. A job announcement for the position of director (see page 2) has been posted, and applications are being accepted. Audubon Missouri, which is eventually expected to have a paid staff of several specialists, will revolutionize Audubon's role in the state.

The Council will have many questions to decide before the office can be established. The most important of these is the future role of the Missouri Audubon Council itself. The state office will take over the legislative liaison activities of the Council and will be actively engaged in conservation and environmental programs. Will it be desirable to keep the Council in place as a check on the state office since the director will be an employee of National Audubon, not of the Council? Or will the Council become redundant?

Another question is the location of the state office. It is assumed that the office will be centrally located, in Jefferson City or in Columbia. But Dan McGuiness has proposed that if the office were located near St. Louis, perhaps in the Columbia Bottoms area near the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, it could be combined with a local office for the Upper Mississippi River Campaign.

Upper Mississippi River Campaign — Dan McGuiness, National Audubon's director of

the Upper Mississippi River Campaign, described this Audubon campaign as it has developed in its first 8 months. Dan's objectives are (1) to inform people about the ecological significance of the Upper Mississippi River and its watershed, (2) to take direct action to protect existing habitat and restore degraded or lost habitat along the river, and (3) to influence public decisions and actions that affect the quality of the water, health of the soil, and the ecological value of the habitat in the river, on its floodplain, and on the riparian lands and bluff lands of the watershed.

Dan announced that he will be given the use of a 52-foot riverboat that he will use this year to visit cities along the river from the Twin Cities to Dubuque. Next year he will make similar visits to cities from Dubuque to Cairo, publicizing his campaign at each stop.

Audubon chapters from the Twin Cities to St. Louis are working on a birding trail, with loops in each of the major cities, that birders can follow as they drive along the Great River Road. A similar trail along the Texas Gulf Coast has been very successful and has contributed to the economic vitality of the region.

Chip Mills — Dave Bedan, with the Columbia (MO) Audubon Society, has been appointed to the Governor's Advisory Committee on Chip Mills. Dave told the Council that the committee has met twice so far and will probably begin writing its report in August. The National Audubon Society has also formed a chip mill advisory committee that will report to the Society at the board of directors' meeting to be held in Memphis on March 25-27. Roger Pryor, senior policy director for the Missouri Coalition for the Environment, is serving on that committee.

Last year 1.2 million acres, primarily in the southeastern states, were cut over to supply timber for high capacity chip mills. It is sometimes argued that primarily scrap timber is sent to chip mills, but visitors to the Willamette mill on the Black River near Mill Springs report seeing many truckloads of mature logs. The enormous demand for timber to satisfy these high capacity mills often leads to the practice of clear cutting, which may have a devastating effect on wildlife habitat and

pollutes our clear-flowing Ozark streams.

Extensive clear cutting in the Central Ozarks could be devastating to populations of forest-loving birds which need the protection of deep forest cover to protect them from cowbirds and predators. Studies in the Shawnee Forest of southern Illinois, for instance, show that many nesting birds have such a low breeding success rate that they are unable to maintain their populations. It is hypothesized that many of the birds found breeding in the Shawnee were fledged either in the Ozarks or in the Appalachians. The Ozarks are a source of birds for many surrounding states.

Legislative Priorities — Scott Penman, the legislative liaison agent for the Council, reported that the spring session of the General Assembly was off to a slow start. New members of the Assembly have to be introduced to the procedures, and new committees must be appointed. So far in the session, there are few environmental bills of major importance.

House Bill (HB) 301 (Environmental Audit Privilege) is similar to bills that have been introduced in several recent sessions. The bill provides that owners of facilities regulated by environmental laws may conduct voluntary "internal audits" to determine their compliance with the laws and that any information so obtained is "privileged," i.e., not subject to disclosure and not admissible as evidence in any legal action. These laws sometimes shield the owners from prosecution for illegal activities. It is not expected that this bill will find much support.

Senate Bill (SB) 118, introduced by Senator Wayne Goode, modifies the motor vehicle emission inspection program for the St. Louis area and, it is hoped, will lead to a meaningful inspection program, as required by the Environmental Protection Agency.

SB 195, relating to environmental protection, revises the rule-making authority of the Department of Natural Resources on solid wastes, hazardous wastes, underground storage tanks, mineral wastes, air pollution, and water pollution. It provides that state regulation may be "no stricter than" applicable federal regulations. Bills such as this prevent the state from addressing pollution problems that are peculiar to the state and have not been addressed in federal regulations.

In light of the few bills which so far require much attention, the Council decided to concentrate its efforts on educating legislators on the effects of chip mills and the need to devise some sort of effective regulation. Chip mills remain the number 1 priority for the Missouri Audubon Council.

National Audubon Society Launches its Upper Mississippi River Campaign

by Jim Holsen & Dan McGuiness

In the summer of 1998, the National Audubon Society launched its Upper Mississippi River Campaign—a campaign for the ecological restoration of the Upper Mississippi, a campaign for a “living river.” The initial suggestion for the campaign originated with St. Louis Audubon, based in part on ideas which grew out of our participation in the Mississippi River Basin Alliance. Last year St. Louis Audubon met with Eric Draper, National Audubon’s vice president for campaigns, and representatives from Audubon chapters in Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota to develop the objectives and goals for the campaign. Meetings were held in La Crosse, Dubuque, and St. Louis.

In April National Audubon selected Dan McGuiness, then director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission, a bi-state agency working for conservation on the St. Croix and Mississippi River Valleys, to direct the campaign. Dan grew up on a farm in southern Minnesota, but soon became attracted to the Mississippi. In 1968, when he was 20, he spent the first of 3 summers studying the river for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “They gave me a pickup, a canoe, and a motor boat. They were the best summers I ever had,” Dan has said. Now he lives on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi near St. Paul, where the campaign is housed in the offices of Minnesota’s Audubon state office.

The Upper Mississippi and its Watershed —

The Upper Mississippi watershed, spreading across Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri, is a major flyway for millions of waterfowl. It is home to more than 320 bird species, including many on Audubon’s “watch list” of possibly threatened species. But it is also a major commercial navigation system, and the locks, dams, and levees that facilitate barge traffic have had a severe effect on the ecology of the river. Wildlife habitat is being degraded and lost. **Balance is the Key —**

In the early days the river drew settlers because of its incredibly varied ecosystems—broad floodplains, woodlands, and wetlands. But now the effects of 130 years of river modifications for navigation are killing off the submerged vegetation, freshwater mussels, and other invertebrates that are a crucial part of the food chain for the birds, fish, amphibians, and reptiles that live there.

A healthy, living river can support farming and conservation, commercial navigation, and birding. The goal of Audubon’s Upper Missis-

issippi River Campaign is to strike the right balance. In 1986 Congress declared the Upper Mississippi to be both a “nationally significant ecosystem and a nationally significant navigation system.” But for some time, the balance has been awry—now it is time to make sure that the river is managed to sustain ecosystems as well as navigation systems.

What Urgent Problems Must be Addressed —

River Flow Control — Locks, dams, and levees, constructed to facilitate navigation, have changed the habitat around the river and its tributaries. Impoundments and constriction of the floodplain have resulted in the destruction of backwaters, wetlands, and forests, which provide food and nesting areas for many species of birds and other animals.

Sedimentation — Changing the river’s flow has produced sediment and silt, which clog the channels, smothering aquatic plants and killing off vital food supplies.

Contamination — Pesticides, PCBs, and other persistent chemicals continue to pollute the river. In 41 percent of the river, fish advisories have been issued because of concentrations of PCBs, chlordane, and DDT. (These advisories include reaches of the Mississippi above and below St. Louis.) High levels of nutrients have created an oxygen-depleted “dead zone” in the Gulf of Mexico.

Expansion of the Navigation System — In the near future the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) is expected to propose a new plan that will most probably include an expanded navigation system—longer locks and eventually a deeper channel. The COE is concerned with the Mississippi as a working river, but Audubon will ensure that the environmental concerns of the living river are also taken into consideration.

(It is said that the Corps has recently reassigned the chief economist on its navigation study because his analysts could not justify, on the basis of projected barge traffic, the longer locks that the Corps wants to construct.)

What Can Audubon Accomplish —

Audubon’s campaign will rely on the grassroots support of the 43 chapters and over 40,000 members in the 5-state watershed. All Audubon campaigns are based on 3 principles:

Educating and Disseminating Information — Audubon will disseminate information on the ecological balance of the Upper Mississippi by sponsoring a birding trail along the Great River Road, by sponsoring field trips on the river (by canoe, houseboat, and steamboat), and by

presenting exhibits, slide shows, and a Web site. The goal will be to create a local and then a national awareness of what this mighty ecosystem means for our national heritage of biodiversity.

Taking Direct Action — Audubon will build a network of river stewards who will work to protect and restore habitat in the 5-state watershed. Audubon will work with land trusts and public agencies to protect and acquire land, will support urban riverfront renewal projects, and will collaborate with Audubon refuge keepers in the wildlife refuges. Audubon will also work to collect data to demonstrate the effects of river modifications on wildlife and habitat. This Audubon campaign, like others, will promote a science-based management of resources.

Influencing Public Policy — Audubon’s activists have always been effective in influencing public policy. In 1986 Congress authorized funds for the Environmental Management Program (EMP) on the Upper Mississippi. Audubon will work to see that these funds are reauthorized and used effectively. Audubon is collaborating on a report to Congress, called “A Strategy for Operation of and Maintenance of the Natural Resources of the Upper Mississippi River System,” that will help to channel funds into environmental programs.

We will be hearing more about the campaign as it gets underway.

Award Nominations Requested

by Julie Leemann

Nominations are now being accepted for the St. Louis Audubon Society **Conservationist of the Year** and the **Robert J. Terry Award**.

The St. Louis Audubon Society is also offering new awards this year. The **Legislator of the Year Award** will be given to a local elected official who best supports the mission of the Audubon Society. **High School Student Awards** will be given to exemplary high school seniors who plan further study in ecology, biology, or related fields. Student applications must include a faculty recommendation.

All nominations should be sent by February 15 to:

**Julie Leemann
1004 Sanders Dr.
Crestwood, MO 63126**

These awards will be presented at the Audubon annual dinner on April 22.

AUDUBON ADVENTURES



Butterflies

by Bill Groth

Whether they are called leptir, mariposa, schmetterling, or butterfly, many people consider them the most beautiful animals created. Like almost every other creature, butterflies have suffered from habitat destruction and insecticides.

Probably the best known butterfly is the Monarch. More Monarchs migrate and fly farther than any other insect. For more than 20 years, scientists have been tagging and recapturing Monarchs. The resulting data has not provided as much information as hoped.

New research indicates that half of the more than 100 million Monarchs wintering in Mexico come from the Midwest, and the best conservation effort to save them would be to provide food for the larvae and nectar for the adults. We all can join in this effort by planting and protecting butterfly weed and other members of the milkweed and dogbane families.

Other butterfly species can be helped also by plantings that provide nectar and food for larvae. Most native flowers, like black-eyed Susan, ironweed, the mint family, asters (and cultivated varieties), and blazing star, are used by some butterflies. Cultivated flowers, such as marigolds, zinnias, daisies, coneflowers (and native species), and live forever, as well as shrubs like privets, butterfly bush and lilac, all produce nectar for adult butterflies. Some plants that provide food for larvae include carrots, dill, and parsley (Black Swallowtail); violets (Great Spangled Fritillary); willows, plums, and cherries (Viceroy, Red-spotted Purple, Tiger Swallowtail); and thistles (Painted Lady). Of course, if you plant for larval feeding, you must give up the gardening notion of having "perfect-looking" plants.

Now is the time to contact your local city or county government and encourage the appropriate departments to utilize butterfly-attractive plants in their landscaping. These species probably cost no more than what they usually use but will have immeasurable value.

For additional information, the Missouri Department of Conservation has a pamphlet *Butterfly Gardening and Conservation*, and the Butterfly House in St. Louis County's Faust Park has an information sheet called "Seven Easy Steps to Beautiful Backyard Butterflies." If you have not visited the Butterfly House, it is difficult to find a more pleasant place to spend an hour or so on a cold winter day. For hours and directions, call 361-3365.

The Education Corner

Bird Song Class Offered

by Charlene Malone

An Introduction to Missouri Bird Song class will be offered at St. Louis Community College (SLCC) at Florissant Valley this spring. This time, the class will include 3 sessions on Wednesdays from March 24 to April 7, in the classroom. As a fourth meeting, a field trip is scheduled to Busch Conservation Area in St. Charles County on Saturday, April 17, to apply the students' newly learned skills.

Spring is the best time to hear the birds in their vocal glory. Come and learn the basic songs of the warblers and other passerines that breed or migrate through Missouri with the use of mnemonics and other "tricks of the trade." Last spring, were you frustrated by being able only to hear the birds and not to see them in the overgrown trees and bushes? It's time to learn just what those feathered creatures were that were taunting you incessantly from their protective cover.

To register, call SLCC at Florissant Valley at 595-4444. For more information about the class, call Charlene Malone at 536-1119.

Audubon Camp Scholarships Available

by Julie Leemann

The St. Louis Audubon Society is again offering 3 scholarships to National Audubon's ecology camps, located in Connecticut, Maine, Minnesota, and Wyoming. The scholarships cover the cost of the 6- or 7-day camp session fee and include \$100 toward the cost of transportation.

Educators are especially encouraged to apply. Camp scholarship information is typically sent to the science coordinators of the St. Louis area school districts in late January. Interested applicants unable to obtain this information from their science coordinators should contact:

Julie Leemann
1004 Sanders
Crestwood, MO 63126
H# 962-2093 (evenings)

Persons interested in attending camps on their own or obtaining information on other U.S.

and international Audubon ecology workshops should contact:

National Audubon Society
Camps and Ecology Workshops
613 Riversville Rd.
Greenwich, CT 06831
Ph. 203/869-2017
email: aew@audubon.org

The Goose Story

submitted by Mary Dueren

Next fall when you see geese heading south for the winter flying along in a "V" formation, you might be interested in knowing what science has discovered about why they fly that way. It has been learned that as each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds at least 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.

Lesson: *We who share a common direction and sense of community are traveling on the thrust of one another.*

Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone and quickly gets into formation again to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front.

Lesson: *If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed where we want to go.*

When the lead goose gets tired, he rotates back in the wing, and another goose flies point.

Lesson: *It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership—interdependent with each other.*

The geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. (What do we say when we honk from behind?)

Lesson: *We need to make sure our honking from behind is encouraging, not something less helpful.*

Finally, when a goose gets sick or is wounded by gun shots and falls out, 2 geese fall out of formation and follow him down to help and protect him. They stay with him either until he is able to fly or until he is dead, and they then launch out on their own or with another formation to catch up with the group.

Lesson: *If we have as much sense as the goose, we'll stand by each other like that.*

Get Set for the 1999 Great Backyard Bird Count!

by Mary Dueren

The second annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is set for February 19, 20, 21, and 22. An additional day has been added so that schools can participate as well. This year's GBBC is being sponsored by the National Audubon Society, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Ford Motor Company, and Wild Birds Unlimited.

So, warm up your computers, Internet birders! Here's what you can do to help take an immense snapshot of the birds feeding at our feeders this winter. First, log on to

<http://birdsource.cornell.edu> before the count begins so that you can be familiar with what data is needed for the count. Then click on the Great Backyard Bird Count link. There you will find instructions on how to count and the electronic form to submit to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

The instructions are simple. You can count and submit a form on each day of the count or just send one count record. You must observe birds at your backyard feeder, in a nature area, or even from a walk that has occurred within 1 mile of your residence, for a minimum of 15 minutes. The longer you observe, the better the data. Cornell Lab prefers that a half hour be spent observing birds. For each day, remember to record the highest number of each species seen at the same time. When it is time to log on and submit the data, here are 2 important guidelines:

1. Do not add together counts from different days. For example, if you see 3 cardinals on February 19 and 5 cardinals on the next day, the form submitted on February 20 should report only 5 cardinals.

2. Please do not add single birds seen separately on the same day. For example, if you saw only 1 Red-bellied Woodpecker at your feeder in the first 15 minutes and it later flies off and then a Red-bellied Woodpecker appears on the feeder later, report only 1. Chances are that this is a single individual returning over and over to the feeder.

Last year, 14,000 forms were submitted with backyard data, and there is great enthusiasm building for this count. For anyone who wishes to participate but does not have a computer, please contact Mary Dueren at home (576-1473) in the evenings. I will be happy to submit an electronic form for you.

Good luck—don't forget to log back on to Birdsource to check on all the results of this great citizens' science project!

But Everyone Has to Eat Something!

by Paul Bauer

Every time I go birding, some unique experience occurs. After more than 50 years of birding, I might worry about getting jaded since I have seen it all! *Not true!!* Early in 1998, I experienced an event in the St. Louis area that I had never seen before.

That day it snowed lightly, and Mike Treffert and I had planned a full day of birding. The new snow made it more interesting since birds would be very actively feeding. We were at Busch Conservation Area in St. Charles County, had parked behind the Lake 33 dam, and walked to Dardeene Creek. Birding was slow at first, but then I noticed a small woodpecker across the creek, high in a tree, creeping up the trunk. My first thought was "It's a Downy." However, I have learned over the years to look at every bird since that is how one finds the

unusual or rare bird. I was hoping for a Hairy Woodpecker.

With my binoculars raised to view the woodpecker, I was aware of a flash of movement out of the right side of my eye. With my binoculars trained on the Downy, I witnessed a Sharp-shinned Hawk swoop in, flair for a landing, pluck the woodpecker off that tree trunk, and return to land on a limb overhanging the creek. There the hawk proceeded to pluck feathers off the small woodpecker.

I had seen other kills of waterfowl or shorebirds, but never a forest bird caught by a hawk. Of course, Mike and I felt sad for the woodpecker yet happy because the hawk caught a good meal. Our excitement and discussion caused the hawk to move twice to a different perch and then finally to fly off, carrying the meal to a more private eating place.

This experience was the highlight of birding that day! However, that may be hard for some to understand.

Many unusual questions about birds come to me through the St. Louis Audubon answering service. Once I was unsuccessful in helping a lady feel better after she had witnessed a crow catch a baby "bunny" in the spring. I carefully explained that the mother crow had babies to feed just like every other creature. She understood what was said but was not really happy with my answer to her concern.

Nature and, indeed, all of our lives are filled with life and death experiences. Everyone enjoys the sight of baby animals or birds because this is new life. Each of us realizes that for every beginning, there must be an end. This is the natural and realistic progression of events and should in no way reduce our enjoyment of nature.

Always have fun—go birding!

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